



**The Past, Present, and Future of the Air Force's  
Future Total Force**

GRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

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AFIT/GMO/ENS/04E-04

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The Past, Present and Future of the Air Force's Future Total Force

GRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

Presented to the Faculty

Graduate School of Engineering and Management

Air Force Institute of Technology

Air University

Air Education and Training Command

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Air Mobility

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June 2004

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## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Colonel Larry Etzel for offering me the opportunity to attend ASAM in the first place, and for finding the funds for my attendance when all seemed lost. His example of professionalism and leadership will not be forgotten and is greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank Colonel Thad Livingston, LtC Bob Dangredo, and Janice Missildine for their invaluable assistance with this project.

Finally, a word of thanks goes out to my wife and children, whose patience with me as I worked through this project is inexpressibly appreciated.

Dennis Duffy

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## List of Acronyms

ACC	Air Combat Command
ACW	Air Control Wing
AEF	Air and Space Expeditionary Force
AETC	Air Education and Training Command
AFB	Air Force Base
AFI	Air Force Instruction (regulation)
AFRC	Air Force Reserve Command
AMC	Air Mobility Command
ANG	Air National Guard
ARC	Air Reserve Command
BDU	Battle Dress Uniform
DoD	Department of Defense
FTF	Future Total Force
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	General Accounting Office
J-STARS	Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System
LD/HD	Low-Density/High-Demand
MAC	Mobility Airlift Command – the precursor of AMC
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OASD/RA	Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom

OSD-RFPB	Office of the Secretary of Defense – Reserve Forces Policy Board
US	United States
USAF	United States Air Force



## **Abstract**

This project examines the history of the Total Force policy since its inception in 1970 through its implementation today in an effort to determine a future direction for the Air Force's Future Total Force initiative. It cites histories of the Air Force, the Air National Guard, and the Air Force Reserve to depict the historical reference for the Total Force policy. The project relies on the Congressional testimony by subject matter experts such as undersecretaries of defense, the Secretary of the Air Force, and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, as well as the Air Force's own Future Total Force policy pamphlet to relate the current implementation and potential future direction for the policy. Analysis of the past implementation does offer lessons for future implementation of the policy. These lessons include the undeniable efficacy of the policy, given proper manning and funding of the Air Reserve Component. The vital importance of maintaining a symbiotic relationship between the active duty and Air Reserve Component represents another lesson of the history of the Total Force policy. Finally, realizing the limitations of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve within the context of the Air and Space Expeditionary Force is a final lesson to consider when determining the future of the Air Force's Future Total Force.

# **The Past, Present, & Future of the Air Force's Future Total Force**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Background**

Recent calls for a reinstatement of the military draft to augment U.S. forces in Iraq elicit dark memories of the Vietnam War. These calls raise doubts about the adequacy of an all-volunteer force, as well as the breaking point of the Total Force policy. This project considers the history of the Total Force policy, from its origins in the Vietnam War, through the build up in the Reagan era, to the fall of the Iron Curtain and subsequent search for the Cold War “peace dividend”, all of which effectively increased the U.S. Air Force’s dependence on the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, known as the Air Reserve Component (ARC). The attacks of September 11, 2001 accelerated the pace and intensity of that dependency. As Secretary of the Air Force James G. Roche put it when he discussed the changing roles of the Air Reserve Component in today’s Air Force, “We have new challenges today – challenges that were intensified, but not created by the events of 9/11” (Roche, 2003). These challenges include the frequency and length of mobilizations, the current mix of forces between the ARC and active duty, and the obstacles to further integration of the components. Once known as Total Force, the policy of needing Reserve or Guard participation for the conduct of nearly any military operation has evolved since the Vietnam War. The most recent iteration of the policy, which the Air Force now calls Future Total Force, looks for more efficient ways to utilize the Air Reserve Component, and realizes the important role of reservists and guardsmen at every level of conflict, not just major conflicts. Instead of a truly reserve force used if-and-only-if the Cold War got suddenly and unexpectedly hot,

the Air Reserve Component today performs many of the missions required across the spectrum of conflict from military operations other than war to major regional conflicts. Instead of wearing the nation's uniform one weekend a month and two weeks a year typical of Cold War-era participation, ARC members today don their blues, BDUs, and flight suits for extended active duty tours measured in months and years. ARC forces have gone from Cold War flying clubs to necessary partners in the War on Terror.

First demonstrated with the activation of Air Reserve Component forces for Operation Desert Shield/Storm in 1990 after steady improvements in funding and manpower throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Air Force's increased reliance on reservists and guardsmen to accomplish a wide variety of missions continues to this day with Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. With the ARC's changing roles and the USAF's increased reliance upon it, prudence dictates an examination of the proper mix of capabilities between the active duty and Air Reserve Component forces, and how the Air Force can more efficiently use them. To evaluate these issues, this project takes a look at the history of the Air Force's implementation of the Total Force policy, as well as how and why the ARC went from a true reserve force used sparingly under the beginnings of the policy, to a force required for nearly any contingency Air Force operation under Future Total Force. With an understanding of the 'how' and the 'why' the ARC got to where it is today, this project then examines the current implementation of Future Total Force. It describes the current concepts and goals of the policy, as well as the organizational constructs it presently employs. Finally, the paper discusses a potential direction for the Air Force's Future Total Force initiative

based on what led to the policy and the problems with how it is currently put into practice.

## **Problem**

Since the end of the Vietnam War, the dependency of the active duty Air Force upon of the Air Reserve Component has drastically changed. The ARC changed from a Cold War flying club in the years prior to the implementation of the Total Force policy, to a full partner of the active duty in the Global War on Terror, while still operating under many Cold War paradigms and inefficiencies. Under the transformational initiative known as Future Total Force, the Air Force seeks to optimize the utilization of its guardsmen and reservists. Currently, the Air Force calls upon its reservists and guardsmen to perform more missions more frequently and for longer periods than ever before, particularly in the Air and Space Expeditionary Force construct and in defense of the homeland in Operation Noble Eagle. Consequently, the ARC forces have responded with greater participation than ever before; however, the Future Total Force initiative demands *not simply more* uses for the ARC, but continuously *wiser* and more *efficient* uses of the ARC. Implementation of Future Total Force requires breaking down many of the Cold War paradigms under which the ARC currently operates, including inefficiencies in the activation process for both individuals and entire units, legal restrictions regarding the utilization of Air Reserve Component personnel, particularly Air National Guard members, as well as assumptions about the structure and mix of capabilities between active and ARC units. Understanding the historical factors that influenced the development of Future Total Force from the end of the Cold War through the War on Terror, as well as an examination of its current implementation in Operations

Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom, leads to recommendations about the future application of the policy.

### **Research Question**

Based on an examination of the historical factors that influenced its development from the Vietnam era and the Cold War to Operations Noble Eagle and Iraqi Freedom of today, in what direction should the Air Force take its utilization of the Air Reserve Component under the transformational initiative known as Future Total Force?

### **Investigative Questions**

What factors influenced the development of the Future Total Force initiative?

What is Future Total Force?

Why is Future Total Force important?

How is Future Total Force currently implemented?

Based on the factors that influenced its development, and its current implementation, what direction should the Air Force take with regard to Future Total Force in the coming years?

What caution should be observed with regard to future application of Future Total Force initiatives?

### **Scope and Limitations**

This project relates primarily to the U.S. Air Force's use of the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and Air National Guard (ANG), not necessarily to the other services' utilization of their respective reserve components. Although it examines the reserve components of the other services in general, the examination is simply for comparison. In addition, the project scrutinizes the Air Reserve Component's usage only since the end

of the Vietnam War as it relates to the development of the Total Force policy, up through to the present day with the implementation of Future Total Force personnel and organizational initiatives. Finally, it discusses a possible direction for the appropriate application of the policy into the future. It does not attempt to describe the entire, comprehensive history of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, even though their respective histories overflow with examples of cooperation and integration from the very beginning of aviation and the Wright brothers.

On a final note, this project is seen primarily through the prism of an Air Force Reserve pilot in Air Mobility Command (AMC), who started his career in its Mobility Air Command predecessor; therefore, an emphasis underlying the theme of this project is how AMC has been affected, is currently affected, and could possibly be affected by Future Total Force initiatives. When this project discusses the reluctance of some in the ARC to integrate, the author shares that reluctance as well. When it describes skepticism about maintaining unit identity in the face of integration, the author shares that skepticism. The original concept of this project was to demonstrate how appropriate – or inappropriate - it would be for Air Mobility Command to ‘blend’ its units, based on the history of the Reserve performance in recent conflicts, and the danger of fixing something that is not broken. However, visits to Headquarters Air Mobility Command, and to Headquarters Air Force made it clear that blending was not in store for AMC units across the board, as yet. Although the emphasis of the project then shifted to the future application of Future Total Force initiatives based on what has worked in the past, the bias of the author regarding some of these initiatives amounts to a factor the reader should consider.

This project recounts the history of the Total Force policy from 1970 to the War on Terror in an effort to recommend some direction and guidance for the use of Air Reserve Component forces in the future. It describes the reasoning behind the original concept of a total force, and how that concept transformed into policy in the 1970s, as well as how it is still transforming today. Based on the lessons of its history, recommendations for future Air Reserve Component employment follow, with an explanation of how these recommendations were derived, and suggestions for future areas of research within the Total Force arena.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### From Total Force to Future Total Force – How and Why

During the Vietnam War, President Lyndon Johnson made the conscious decision not to utilize the Guard and Reserve in favor of relying on the draft for military strength. According to Gerald T. Cantwell, Director of Historical Services for the Headquarters Air Force Reserve, this decision was based on political calculation, not military strategy (Cantwell, 1994:199-204). Undoubtedly, many factors contributed to Johnson's decision, but Harry Summers, in his book *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War*, attributes it to Johnson's desire to achieve his 'Great Society' (Summers, 1992: 80). "At the very beginning of the war. Johnson had made a conscious decision not to mobilize the American people – to invoke the national will – for the Vietnam war for fear it would jeopardize his 'Great Society' social programs" (Summers, 1992: 8). Summers contends that mobilizing the Reserves and Guard equates to mobilizing the American people and national will, an idea that became known as the Abrams Doctrine, named for the Army Chief of Staff of the time, Creighton Abrams, who recognized and codified this relationship (Summers, 1992: 8). Born out of the frustration over the lack of Reserve and Guard usage during the Vietnam War, President Richard Nixon's Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird first articulated the Total Force concept in 1970 (Laird, 1970).

Within the Department of Defense, ...economies will require reductions in over-all strengths and capabilities of the active forces, and increased reliance on the combat and the combat support units of the Guard and Reserves.

Emphasis will be given to the concurrent consideration of the Total Forces, Active and Reserve, to determine the most advantageous mix to support national strategy and meet the threat. A total force concept will be applied in all aspects of



planning, programming, manning, equipping, and employing Guard and Reserve Forces. (Laird, 1970).

Laird realized the financial savings and strategic military benefits of sustaining an effective peacetime reserve force as an integral part of the total military force.

Furthermore, Laird's Total Force policy meant that if the United States were to go to war ever again, it would require activation to some degree of the Guard or the Reserve, and therefore, would require the political and social support of the nation. Three years after suggesting the Total Force concept, Laird's successor, James Schlesinger, formalized its status. "Total Force is no longer a 'concept.' It is now the Total Force Policy which integrates the Active, Guard, and Reserve forces into a homogeneous whole (Schlesinger, 1973)." But implementing the Total Force meant upgrading the status of the Guard and Reserve from an under-funded and largely dormant force to an effective fighting force (Gross, 1984:166). According to retired Air Force Colonel James L. Gould, former Director of Mobilization Planning for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Dr. Edward J. Philbin, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs), the Total Force policy represents a significant milestone for the development of the Guard and Reserve.

The total force policy brought to the fore several implicit features of the nation's defense posture. The most important of these was that the United States cannot successfully mount and sustain a significant military operation without the Guard and Reserve. It also acknowledged that constraints on military budgets require that an increasingly large portion of our military strength reside in the Guard and Reserve. (Gould and Philbin, 1985:47)

In his book *Prelude to the Total Force: The Air National Guard 1943-1969*, Charles Gross credits the Air Guard with the development of the Total Force policy (Gross, 1984:167). "Behind the 'Total Force' policy lay the Air Force's experience with

its reserve programs, especially the Air Guard. In a larger sense, the Air Guard and the Air Force had pioneered a 'Total Force' approach to reserve programs (Gross, 1984:167).” Given that the Air Force led the way toward the development of the Total Force policy by giving Laird confidence in the Guard and Reserve, it comes as no surprise that the USAF also incorporated the policy more quickly and effectively than other services. “The Defense Department’s Total Force study of 1975 had found that the Total Force philosophy was more advanced in the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard than it was in the other reserve components (Cantwell, 1994:333).”

But the Total Force policy, at its inception, was not without some harsh critics. In his 1974 staff paper for the Brookings Institution called *U.S. Reserve Forces: The Problem of the Weekend Warrior*, Martin Binkin raised many concerns about an increased reliance on the Guard and Reserve for national defense. These concerns included whether or not the reserves components could attract and maintain quality people in a all-volunteer force, whether or not they could effectively overcome a lack of modern equipment, and whether or not it was worth the cost of upgrading and training the Guard and Reserve forces (Binkin, 1974: 16, 30). In a Cold War atmosphere dominated by the presumption of future combat on the plains of Europe between the Warsaw Pact and North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces, Binkin even questioned the wisdom of maintaining *any* sizeable reserve force, given the anticipated lightening speed of the Soviet advance.

If this [a very quick war in Europe] is correct, this evaluation raises a fundamental question with respect to U.S. forces that has important implications for reserve forces: What purpose is served by maintaining forces that would have little effect on the outcome of a short war in Europe? (Binkin, 1974: 60)

Despite its detractors of the 1970s, the Reagan years saw successful advancement of the Total Force policy with an infusion of money, modern equipment, and manpower, particularly within the Air Force. Its application thrived throughout the 1980s.

The defense buildup of the 1980s affected the Air Force Reserve in many ways. The Air Force followed through on the force modernization commitment central to Total Force, an effort that saw six Air Force Reserve wings and ten Air Force Reserve groups undergo some type of major equipment conversion. (Cantwell, 1994: 348)

Verifying the effectiveness of its conversion efforts, a 1982 study published by the National Defense University concluded “The Air Reserve forces present a textbook case of success for the total-force policy. A measure of this success is reflected in the fact that these units have repeatedly demonstrated their capability to mobilize and deploy (Smith, 1985: 117).” Also in 1982, the Air Force Management Assistance Group submitted a report on the effectiveness of Air Force Reserve management. Their report commended the Reserve for a high state of readiness, and even said that “in many operational areas (they) have repeatedly proven to be highly qualified, often demonstrating greater skills than active force personnel (Cantwell, 1994: 339-340).” Furthermore, the report suggested sweeping changes to the structure and management of the Air Force Reserve at the highest levels, bringing it more closely under the direct control of active duty commanders (Cantwell, 1994: 340). The subsequent rejection of these radical changes by the Air Force leadership of 1982, both civilian and military, active and reserve, set a precedent for the Total Force limitations of the 1980s, and it teaches a valuable lesson to those seeking similar changes today.

Although implementation of the Total Force policy progressed through the 1980s, prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain, reservists and guardsmen found themselves mired in

Cold War paradigms. Charles Cragin, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs in the Clinton administration, summarized this period with the following:

During the decade of the 1980s, they (Reservists and Guardsmen) numbered over one million personnel but contributed support to the active forces at a rate of fewer than one million man days per year. To serve in reserve during that period meant finding oneself suspended in the frozen logic of the Cold War. (Cragin, 2000)

As the Cold War came to an end during the late 1980s, the logic of keeping the Guard at home and the Reserve strictly in reserve ended as well. Massive cuts in defense spending throughout the total force as the Cold War grinded to an end replaced the massive military budgets of just a few years prior, and the search for a peace dividend commenced. This further necessitated the use of reserve forces to conduct any sizeable military operation. One such operation, Just Cause in December 1989, served as a preview for this required use and increased role of Air Reserve Component forces. During Operation Just Cause, the United States removed the dictator of Panama, Manuel Noriega, from power. On the initial invasion force on 19 December 1989, at least five ARC crews integrated with their active counterparts flying important combat and combat support missions (Cantwell, 1994: 362). Furthermore, in the ensuing six weeks, the ARC strategic airlift, special operations, air refueling, and tactical airlift crews flew a total of 621 sorties and more than 1500 flying hours in support of the military action (Cantwell, 1994:362). Major General Roger P. Scheer, Chief of the Air Force Reserve at the time, summarized ARC participation in Operation Just Cause with the following:

It really didn't matter what component of the Air Force was flying a mission; what mattered was [that] the Air Force was delivering assets as needed. We can be justifiably proud of our Air Force Reserve contributions to Operation Just

Cause. But we should remember that, in a military operation like this, what matters is that air forces contributed properly to the success of the operation. That's Total Force Policy at its best. (Cantwell, 1994:364)

As successful a demonstration of Total Force as Just Cause was, it represented only a precursor to the contributions ARC forces would make in ensuing military operations, particularly Operation Desert Shield/Storm. In response to Iraq's unprovoked invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, President George H. Bush put the Total Force concept to the test by calling upon members of the Guard and Reserve to work hand-in-hand with their active duty counterparts, and expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. According to Harry G. Summers, a retired Army colonel and military analyst for both NBC and CNN during the Gulf War, many in the media doubted the wisdom of employing the reserves prior to the onset of hostilities. "Even at the beginning of the Persian Gulf crisis, there were all kinds of stories about how the all-volunteer military would fall apart at the first sound of the guns" (Summers, 1992: 2). Far from falling apart, the reserve component units activated for the Persian Gulf War proved integral to its successful prosecution. In his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee just after the conflict, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Stephen M. Duncan, characterized the efficacy of the call-up in the following way.

Subsequent to the adoption of the Total Force policy in 1973, and until 22 August 1990, no unit or individual of the Ready Reserve had been involuntarily called to active duty. The responsiveness to Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm by American Reserve Forces and their performance, in what has been described as "the largest, fastest mobilization since World War II," was remarkably successful by any standard. (Duncan, 1991: 85)

The unquestionably successful implementation of the Total Force policy during the Gulf War became the standard by which all future applications of the policy would be measured. In addition, the Gulf War also substantially divides the history of the Total

Force policy – there is simply before Desert Storm, and after Desert Storm. Before Desert Storm, reserve component call-ups were rare – only eleven in 38 years. However, following Desert Storm, with the military budget cuts of the 1990s and efficacy of the Total Force policy in the conflict, the number of reserve component activations blossomed to more than 60 in the next decade alone. Figure 1 illustrates this dividing line and specifies the activations by operation.



Figure 1. The Dividing Line of Total Force Activity (AFRC, 2004).

Stephan Duncan's successor as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Charles Cragin, also recognized the historic significance of ARC participation in the Gulf War. "Desert Storm was important: it formed a watershed in the use of

reservists for contingency support and demonstrated, in dramatic fashion, their accessibility and ability to respond when needed in an emergency” (Cragin, 2000).

The watershed nature of ARC accessibility and response in the Gulf War was no more evident than in its contribution to mobility forces. According to Dr. James K. Matthews and Cora J. Holt of the United States Transportation Command Research Center, while Military Airlift Command (MAC) numbered 70,000 active duty in 1990 just prior to the conflict, ARC mobility forces totaled 66,000, or just about 48% of MAC’s total force of the time (Matthews and Holt, 1996: 197). Furthermore, as the conflict began, 52% of MAC forces in the theater of operations were ARC members (Matthews and Holt, 1996: 198). They asserted “It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the ARC to MAC’s wartime mission” (Matthews and Holt, 1996: 197). The Total Force policy, born out of under-utilization of the reserve forces during the Vietnam era for political reasons, found its military validation and political verification with the performance of the Reserves and Guard during the Persian Gulf War. Stephen Duncan in his book *Citizen Warriors*, simply states that “Operation Desert Storm conclusively proved the success of the [Total Force] policy (Duncan, 1997: 214).”

Despite the overwhelming success of the Total Force during Operation Desert Shield/Storm, the Department of Defense still sustained drastic budget cuts following the conflict. Once again, the search continued for the elusive peace dividend from the end of the Cold War. The active duty force saw its funding slashed by 34%, and the reserve component shared in the fiscal burden with a reduction of 25%, according to Thomas Hall, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (AFRC News Service, 2003). This shared financial belt-tightening only seems fair and prudent, particularly if a goal of

the Total Force policy is a more closely integrated force. However, returning to the military actions requiring the activation of the Air Reserve Component graphically depicted in Figure 1, it soon becomes apparent that the ARC, in the years following the Gulf War, participated in more conflicts than ever before, but with much less funding. The justification for this level of reserve component dependence, regardless of their level of funding, becomes apparent with a comparison of the costs of active duty versus reserve forces. According to Mr. Jayson L. Spiegel, the Executive Director of the Reserve Officers Association of the United States, “Over a four year period, 100,000 Reservists cost \$3 billion less than 100,000 Active duty personnel. If the significant savings in Reserve unit operations and maintenance costs are included, billions more can be saved in the same period” (Spiegel, 2002). In addition, while it accounts for only four percent of the total Air Force budget, fully twenty percent of the Air Force’s missions are performed or supported by the Air Force Reserve (AFRC, 2004). Had the elusive peace dividend finally been found? Laird’s original intention of creating a cheaper, more efficient total fighting force with prudent reserve component utilization had come to fruition.

It is no wonder that numerous ARC members were called upon and responded to their nation’s call in Somalia, and in Operations Northern and Southern Watch throughout the 1990s. And over 48,000 Reservists to date continue to contribute to the success of Operations Joint Forge and Joint Guardian in Bosnia and Kosovo (Spiegel, 2002).

In September 1997, Secretary of Defense William Cohen took the next step in the implementation of the Total Force policy with his vision for an even more integrated



military. His memorandum entitled 'Integration of the Reserve and Active Components' calls for the elimination of "all residual barriers – structural and cultural – for effective integration within our Total Force" (Cohen, 1997). The memorandum also outlined what Cohen called the "four basic principles" of Total Force integration, listed below.

- Clearly understood responsibility for and ownership of the Total Force by the senior leaders throughout the Total Force
- Clear and mutual understanding on the mission for each unit – Active, Guard, and Reserve – in service and joint/combined operations, in peace and war
- Commitment to provide the resources needed to accomplish assigned missions
- Leadership by senior commanders – Active, Guard, and Reserve – to ensure the readiness of the Total Force (Cohen, 1997)

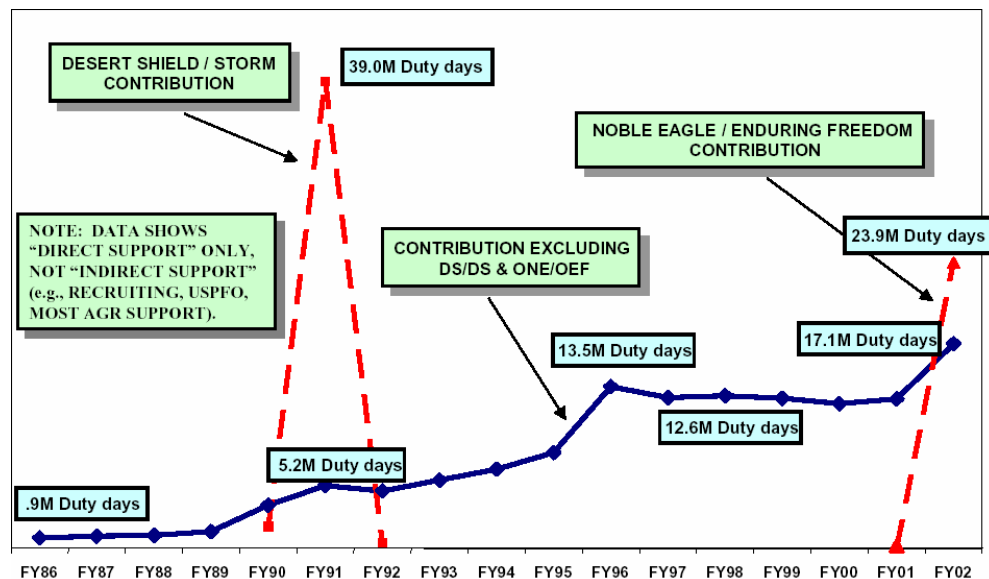
Cohen's vision conveys ownership of the Total Force integration process squarely to the senior military leaders of both the Active and Reserve Components. This effectively puts the responsibility for integration and readiness on all the senior leadership, regardless of component. In addition, his vision calls for an unprecedented level of integration with the removal of all remaining impediments to the Total Force policy. Another significant aspect of Cohen's vision is the recognition for a greater level of mutual understanding on each unit's mission between the Active and Reserve components. This level of understanding represents perhaps the most difficult barrier to integration.

As with the initiation of the Total Force concept in 1970, the Air Force once again led the way for the other military branches in implementing Cohen's renewed 1997 vision. Already participating side-by-side with their Active counterparts in operations in Bosnia and in southwest Asia, the Air Reserve Component again demonstrated the value of the Total Force policy with their key role in the Air and Space Expeditionary Force (AEF) construct. Created in 1998 at the direction of the Air Force Chief of Staff, the AEF divides all of the Air Force – active, Guard, and Reserve – into ten force packages, each

containing a cross section of weapons systems and combat capabilities from geographically separated units. Together, these units form a fighting force of about 150 to 175 aircraft and 15,000 people, able to respond within 72 hours to a contingency (AFI 10-400, 2002). Each Air and Space Expeditionary Force is available to respond to a contingency for 90 days every 15 months, and there are always two AEFs on call (AFI 10-400, 2002). This construct complements the Total Force policy with Active and Reserve component units integrating seamlessly into one fighting force – a force currently composed of at least 20% ARC members (Jumper, 2003). In addition, the Air and Space Expeditionary Force construct epitomizes the symbiotic nature of the Total Force policy, with a reduced operations tempo benefiting the active duty Air Force, and a predictable AEF cycle of activation allowing the Air Reserve Component to better schedule their preparation, training, and participation. The first deployment under the new AEF construct came in October 1999. Applying the lessons learned from AEF Cycle 1, the Air Force was half way through AEF Cycle 2 when the calendar turned to September 11, 2001.

Just as Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm marked watershed events in the use of the Guard and Reserve in demonstrating of the efficacy of the Total Force policy, so too did Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom mark similar milestones in response to the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. Once again, the nation called upon the Guard and Reserve in a time of crisis, and once again, they responded to the call. On the morning of September 12, 2001, over 6000 Reservists and Guardsmen volunteered for duty (AFRC, 2003). Within two months of the attacks, nearly 30,000 ARC members contributed to this nation's War on Terror

(Kitfield, 2002). Vice Chief of the Air Force Reserve, Major General John J. Batbie, calls this level of ARC contribution brought on by 9/11 the “new steady state of operations demanding more from our people and resources” (Batbie, 2003: 6). Since that initial surge, the ARC has flown eighty percent of the Operation Noble Eagle missions protecting the skies over America (Jumper, 2003). By the beginning of March 2003, the ARC flew more than 78,700 total flying hours and 13,400 sorties in support of Enduring Freedom, and 9,715 hours and nearly 1900 sorties supporting Noble Eagle (AFRC, 2003). And by the peak of Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom, over 93,000 Reserve component personnel were called up (OASDRA, 2002: 10). Figure 2 depicts Total Force contributions from the latter days of the Cold War to the start of the War on Terror.



**Figure 2. Total Force Contribution by Year (OASD/RA, 2003)**

Even as ARC participation in Joint Guardian, Noble Eagle, and Enduring Freedom continued, Reservists and Guardsmen once again responded to the requirements of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Many of the same individuals who mobilized

following September 11 also contributed to the liberation of Iraq. As in Desert Storm, Air Mobility Command benefited greatly from ARC contributions. Air Force Reserve Command aircrews alone flew 25 percent of the air refueling missions for US Central Command, and 45 percent of the aero medical evacuation missions (AFRC News Service, 2003). In addition, AFRC provided 45 percent of the C-17 support, 50 percent of the C-5 support, and 90 percent of the C-141 aircraft for OIF (AFRC News Service, 2003). Once again, Operation Iraqi Freedom proved the adage that the Air Force leads DoD in Total Force implementation, and Air Mobility Command, which gained fully 70 percent of all activated reservists in OIF, leads the Air Force in Future Total Force implementation (AFRC News Service, 2003).

Thus far, this project has outlined the history of the Total Force policy – from its inception during the Vietnam era, to the fulfillment and realization of its original vision in the Air and Space Expeditionary Force construct and in reserve component performance in Operation Iraqi Freedom. With an understanding of the factors that influenced the development of the policy, and how the Air Reserve Component has performed under the policy, the project now looks at the ways in which the Air Force currently applies it, known as Future Total Force.

### **The Current Air Force Implementation of Future Total Force**

The transformational initiative known as Future Total Force represents the contemporary Air Force implementation of Laird's original Total Force concept. After explaining the reasons the Air Force needs Future Total Force, this project outlines the programs currently in place to optimize use of the Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and even the civilian personnel working for the USAF. In addition, it continually

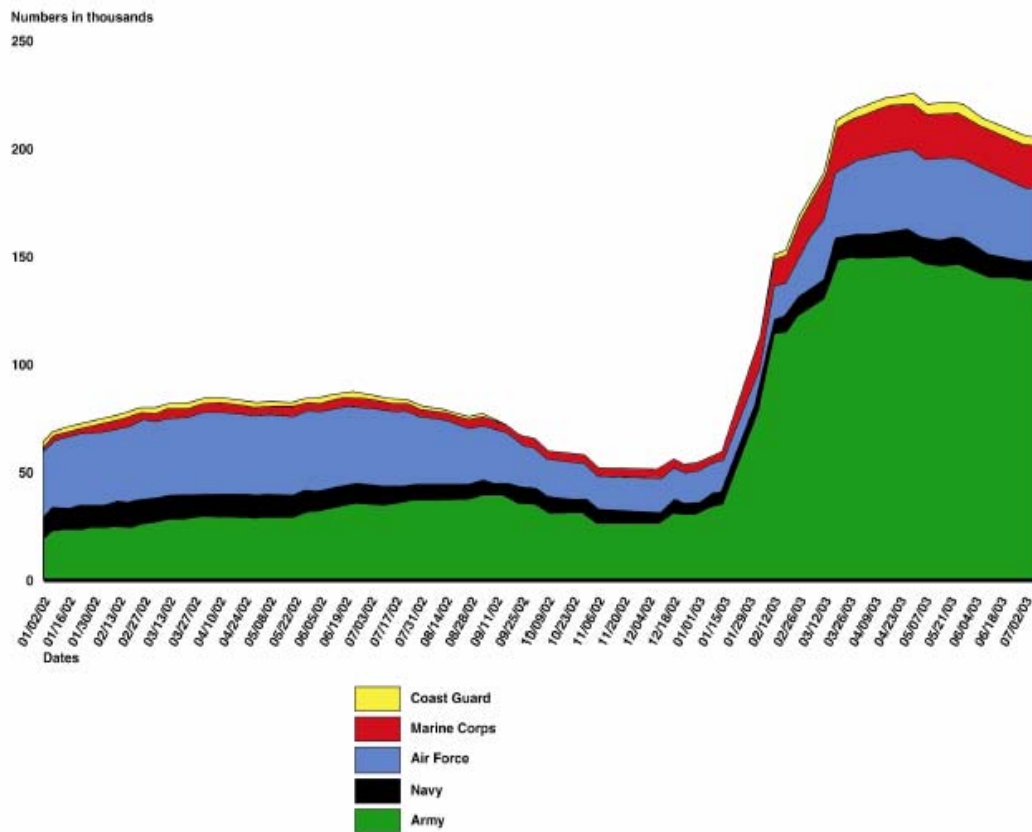
challenges all Air Force members to “further the integration of the air components in a way that is different than its past but still connected to its traditions” (Future Total Force, 2004: 3). Finally, it explores organizational constructs that will facilitate seamless integration and personnel optimization, with the goals of financial savings and greater retention of the Air Force’s greatest asset, its experienced people.

Although the Air Force traditionally has led the way in the Department of Defense’s implementation of the Total Force policy, the reasons that the USAF needs further initiatives and further integration, given the realization of Laird’s original vision of a stronger, more economical total military force, become apparent with a closer examination. Taken from the Future Total Force brochure, these reasons for continuing and improving the Air Force’s implementation of the Total Force policy today are listed below, and further discussed in the following sections.

### **Why a Future Total Force?**

- A new strategic environment requires more daily ARC participation
- High personnel tempo
- Decreasing retention rates
- Greater reliance on the ARC
- Readiness challenges (Future Total Force, 2002: 4)

Figure 3 graphically represents the first reason listed above why Future Total Force initiatives are needed, the “new strategic environment” or what Major General Batbie called the “new steady state of operations” (Batbie, 2003: 6). It is in this environment where the Air Reserve Component forces participate more and for longer sustained periods of time. Figure 3 updates the Reserve contributions depicted in Figure 2, showing activations by component from January 2002 to July 2003.



**Figure 3. Reserve Mobilizations by Service from January 2002 to July 2003**  
(United States General Accounting Office, 2003: 16)

Representative John M. McHugh, Chairman of the House Armed Services Total Force Subcommittee, verified the need for Future Total Force transformation in light of this new strategic environment and greater reliance on the ARC during his opening statement to the subcommittee on 13 March 2003.

The Global War on Terrorism, an open-ended commitment of the U.S. military resources has added new dimensions, missions and manpower requirements for both the active and reserve components and made clear that increased, heavy reliance on the reserve components in peacetime will continue indefinitely.  
(McHugh, 2003)

Agreeing with Representative McHugh about reserve component usage in her testimony before the same subcommittee, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for

Reserve Affairs, Ms. Jennifer Buck, confirmed the second reason Future Total Force initiatives are needed, the high personnel tempo currently endured by all military components. She pointed out that reserve component support increased from 1.4 million duty days in fiscal year (FY) 1989 to almost 13 million duty days in FY 2001 (Buck, 2003). In addition, from FY01 to FY02, the ARC increased its average ‘days away from home station’ rate from 34 to 74 in the Air National Guard, and from 35 to 66 in the Air Force Reserve (Brown, 2003). The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General John Jumper, also commented on the high personnel tempo. “In the years since Desert Storm we have seen our active duty Air Force decrease in size by 40 percent while the demands of the contingency world have increased by 400 percent” (Jumper, 2003). Jumper affirms the need for Total Force initiatives in light of the ‘new steady state of operations’ where high personnel tempo and reliance on the Air Reserve Component is the norm.

In addition to the new strategic environment and high personnel tempo, the third reason for implementing Future Total Force proposals is the increasing pressure on retention and recruiting, particularly within the ARC. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2003, Major General John Batbie, the Vice Chief of Air Force Reserve, confirmed the ARC’s emerging difficulties with these issues. He stated that although the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) met its recruiting goals for both 2001 and 2002, “FY03 is shaping up to be a very challenging year” (Batbie, 2003: 3). He went on to express concern that “retention is a major concern within the Air Force Reserve” (Batbie, 2003: 5). As the Future Total Force pamphlet outlines “when personnel depart military service, we lose skilled, talented, and experienced people. Also, we lose billions of dollars we spent training them” (Future Total Force, 2002: 5).

Therefore, retaining the talented people already in service and attracting people to the Air Reserve Component amount to the third major reason that Future Total Force initiatives must continue.

With the realization of the ‘new strategic environment’ requiring greater Air Reserve Component participation, the high personnel tempo, the declining retention rates and more reliance on the ARC, the need for continuous, effective implementation of Future Total Force personnel initiatives and unit structures becomes apparent. Examples of current organizational constructs in line with Future Total Force implementation include the Reserve Associate unit, the Active Associate unit, and the Blended unit. In action since 1968, the success of the Reserve Associate units contributed to Laird’s original confidence in the reserves and to his development of the Total Force policy in 1970. The Reserve Associate construct has ARC personnel assigned to active duty bases in support of day-to-day flying activities and other functions. In addition to this construct, the Active Associate structure simply reverses the roles of the Reserve Associate, with Active personnel assigned to and supporting unit-equipped ARC bases. Finally, the Air Force accelerated the latest Future Total Force organizational structure where Active and ARC members work in the same unit under the same commander, the Blended Unit, into operation in response to the War on Terror.

Under the Reserve Associate unit construct, ARC personnel are assigned to active duty bases to support the routine activities, to augment flying requirements, and to provide surge capability for contingencies (Future Total Force, 2002: 11). Figure 4 depicts this organizational structure.





**Figure 4. Reserve Associate Unit Construct (Future Total Force 2002: 16)**

Just as the Air Force led the way in the development of the Total Force policy, so too did Military Airlift Command lead the Air Force in the implementation of these initiatives. The 944<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Group from Norton AFB formed the first Reserve Associate unit in 1968 when Air Force Reservists and active duty members came together to share the flying, maintaining, and instructing of their new C-141 aircraft (Cantwell, 1994: 310). Although at first skeptical of this organizational structure due to concerns over losing their unit identity, reservists soon realized the benefits of the program and, by 1974, five airlift wings converted to Reserve Associate wings within Military Airlift Command (Cantwell, 1994: 312). Integral to the success and proliferation of the program was the undeniable support it received from the active and reserve wing and group commanders involved (Cantwell, 1994: 311). Today, all AMC airlift bases employ the Reserve Associate construct (Future Total Force, 2002). As a

result, the Air Mobility Command gains more utilization out of its airlift assets while decreasing personnel tempo of its mobility crewmembers.

The Reserve Associate program predates the Total Force policy by two years, and represents one of the policy's biggest successes. The program has been so successful for Air Mobility Command, in fact, that the Air Force applies the construct to Air Education and Training Command (AETC) and Air Combat Command (ACC), as well as AMC. For AETC, the 340<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Group provides over 600 instructor pilots in five associate reserve flying training squadrons across the country for Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training (AFRC, 2002). For ACC, both the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command instructor fighter pilots contribute valuable experience to their active duty counterparts in the Reserve Associate structure which they call the Fighter Associate Program. The AFRC associate units at Luke AFB and Shaw AFB provide instructors, pilots, and trainers for the F-16 (Future Total Force, 2002: 10). The ANG unit at Tyndall AFB gives similar support for the F-15 (Future Total Force, 2002: 10). Soon, this program will spread to Hill, Eglin, Nellis, and Langley AFBs (ACC News Service, 2003).

Building on the success of the Reserve Associate program, the Air Force reversed the components' roles and came up with the Active Duty Associate structure, where active duty personnel are assigned to unit-equipped Air Reserve Component bases, and fly ARC equipment (Future Total Force, 2002: 12). The 919<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing located at Duke Field, Florida, represents not just the only AFRC special operations unit, but also the Air Force's only Active Associate Unit. Flying C-130 Talon I aircraft, the unit has been highly decorated since its beginning in February 2000, receiving the Air

Force Outstanding Unit Award, as well as 24 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 15 Bronze Stars, and 50 Air Medals (AFRC, 2003). Figure 5 depicts the organizational structure of the Active Associate Unit.



**Figure 5. Active Associate Unit Construct (Future Total Force 2002: 16)**

This organizational structure allows active duty personnel to train along side their typically more experienced reserve counterparts, and the Air Force hopes it will also save money since ARC bases have lower infrastructure costs (Future Total Force, 2002: 12)

In addition to the Reserve Associate and Active Associate structures, the Air Force employs the Blended Unit construct as a critical part of its Future Total Force transformation. The Blended Unit consists of Active, Guard, Reserve, or civilian personnel all assigned to the same wing or squadron who have the flexibility to change from one component or work status to another as requirements dictate. The 116<sup>th</sup> Air Control Wing (ACW) ushered in a new era in transformation on 1 October 2002 when it

merged the active duty 93<sup>rd</sup> Air Control Wing and the Air National Guard's 116<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing into the Air Force's first "blended wing" (One-sixteenth ACW, 2004). In addition to being the first blended wing, the 116<sup>th</sup> ACW is also the only unit flying the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, or J-STARS, the most advanced ground radar and battle management system in the world (One-sixteenth ACW 2004). Just three months after standing-up, the unit deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom, where it flew over 300 sorties and 3,000 hours of flying time (Tirpak, 2003: 26). According to Air Force Chief of Staff John Jumper, the 116<sup>th</sup> performance in OIF was "the largest deployment in the history of Joint STARS. And guess what? It was a resounding success! Nobody can argue with me that this (blended structure) doesn't work. It does work. The only question is, how do we make it work better" (Jumper, 2003)? Figure 6 depicts the Blended Unit Structure.



**Figure 6. Blended Unit Construct**

In addition to the 116<sup>th</sup> ACW, the Air Force is developing another blended unit for the Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle at Nellis AFB, Nevada. This new unit blends all ARC members – Active, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve – under a single commander, with each respective component maintaining administrative control (Roche, 2003). Furthermore, Guardsmen from California will cross state borders to serve in Nevada along with their Nevada Guard, AFRC, and active duty counterparts (Jumper, 2003). As Air Force Secretary James Roche describes it,

This peacetime merger of the three components to support an active installation is without precedent. We expect this program will be the crown jewel for tomorrow's Air Force, integrating the Active, Guard, and Reserve together, where it makes sense to do so (Roche, 2003).

Clearly, the blended unit structure in the Air and Space Expeditionary Force rotation represents a high water mark for Future Total Force initiatives, well beyond what Laird, or Schlesinger, or even Cohen could have dreamt just a short time ago. But whether the Air Force employs the Reserve Associate, Active Associate, the Blended unit, or some other type of construct, leadership must remain cognizant of the original Total Force concept goals of financial efficiencies, better training, and a more effective combat force, while continually preserving the identity and traditions of Air Reserve Component units. With an understanding of the history of the Future Total Force initiative and its application to the unit structures of today's Air Force, an examination of the likely and necessary future of the policy can be made.

### **The Future of Future Total Force**

Not only does Future Total Force provide a current structure to further integrate the ARC with the Active components, the policy also challenges Air Force leadership to

discover “more efficient use of resources, greater flexibility of personnel and administrative systems” (Future Total Force, 2002). Furthermore, it continually points “toward an even closer partnership among the components and a more seamless integration” (Future Total Force, 2002). As such, Future Total Force is not as much a destination to be reached as it is a flight plan for a journey of perpetual improvement, seeking greater efficiencies and an ever more capable force. The first few legs of that journey involve looking for opportunities to apply the policy in different ways to different weapons systems, and improving the mobilization process through which Reserve component members become activated for contingencies, as well as finding the proper mix of Reserve and Active forces. Establishing a ‘continuum of service’ for all components represents the distant horizon of the journey, even as Future Total Force efforts preserve the tradition of the air components and capitalize on their strengths.

Just as the Reserve Associate construct evolved from the then brand new C-141, and the Blended construct developed from the unique J-STARS platform and applies to the Predator units in the process of standing up, so too will the next applications of Future Total Force also continue to develop from the latest weapons systems. According to General Jumper, “We are exploring right now about how we can combine Active, Guard and Reserve into our newest squadron with our newest pieces of equipment – the F/A-22 and, in the future, the F-35, the Joint Strike Fighter” (Jumper, 2003). Applying Future Total Force initiatives to immature weapons systems as they develop leads to greater efficiencies from the start, and prevents the retrofitting of the policy as an afterthought.

But Future Total Force also calls for the retrofit of existing, mature systems wherever appropriate. Examples of this include the Fighter Associate program in Air

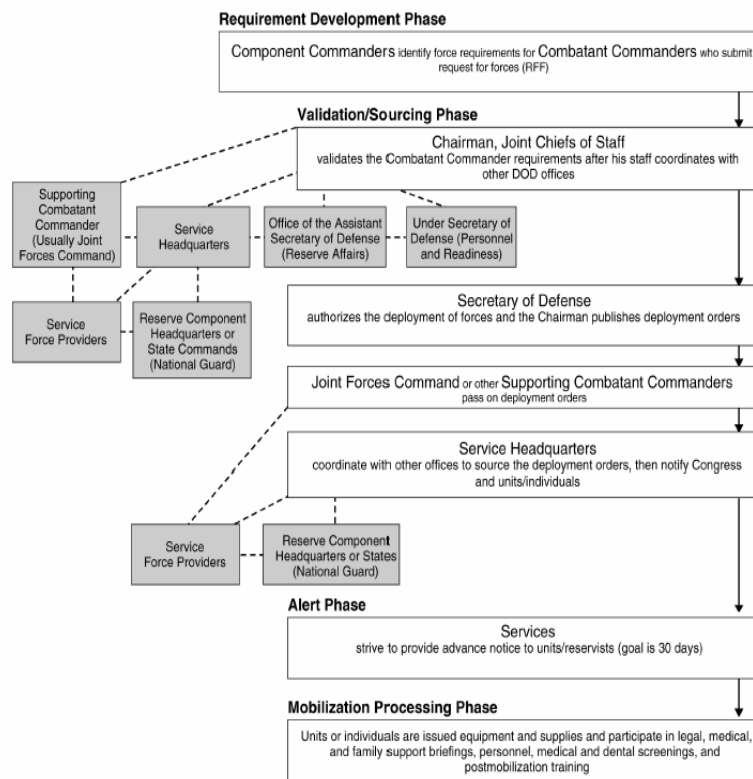
Combat Command and the Air Education and Training Command Reserve Associate Instructor Pilot program. Deputy Chief of Staff for Air Force Plans and Programs, Lieutenant General Duncan McNabb recognizes the need to retrofit the policy to both new and existing units, with some qualification.

Your Air Force is continuing to examine new opportunities to integrate various Air Force units where it is clear that such integration will produce measurable benefits, savings, and efficiencies... We believe we can successfully integrate by leveraging the unique capabilities and characteristics of each component; however, we strongly intend to allow each to retain its cultural identity.  
(McNabb, 2004)

Secretary Roche echoes General McNabb with the caveat of maintaining unit identity in the application of the policy to existing units. “Future Total Force concepts, which include blending, but retain individual unit identities, esprit, and culture are the key to keeping our Air Force the most awesome fighting force on the planet” (Roche, 2003). Both McNabb and Roche realize the mutual reluctance the components have toward integration; a reluctance based in part on the degradation of unit cohesion and distinction. General Jumper sees this reluctance as a non-sequitur when contrasted with the ‘magic’ of Future Total Force integration. “There is magic there and anybody who has been in touch feels that magic. Intuitively, we know that there is more we can do and the only reason we wouldn’t do it is because we are afraid. And we should not be afraid” (Jumper, 2003).

After flying the first legs along the Future Total Force journey by applying the policy to emerging systems and to existing units where appropriate, the next leg involves streamlining the mobilization process to get Reserve component contributors into the fight much faster and more efficiently. Ironically, the lessons learned from Operation Desert Storm included praise for the “smoothness of the process by which Reservists

have been activated” (Duncan, 1991). Just a decade later, however, the Department of Defense recognizes that “the current mobilization process is not sufficiently responsive to 21<sup>st</sup> century operational requirements and will not serve the nation well in the future” (OSD-RFPB, 2003: 3). In a memorandum to the Service Secretaries and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld considered it “a matter of utmost urgency” that the military “make the mobilization and demobilization process more efficient” (Rumsfeld, 2003). Considering that Rumsfeld needed to sign 246 deployment orders to mobilize the 280,000 Guardsmen and Reservists required between September 11, 2001 and May 21, 2003, compared to just 10 deployment orders for the 220,000 called up for the entire 1991 Gulf War, his request for immediate improvements to the mobilization process comes as no surprise (GAO, 2003: 24).



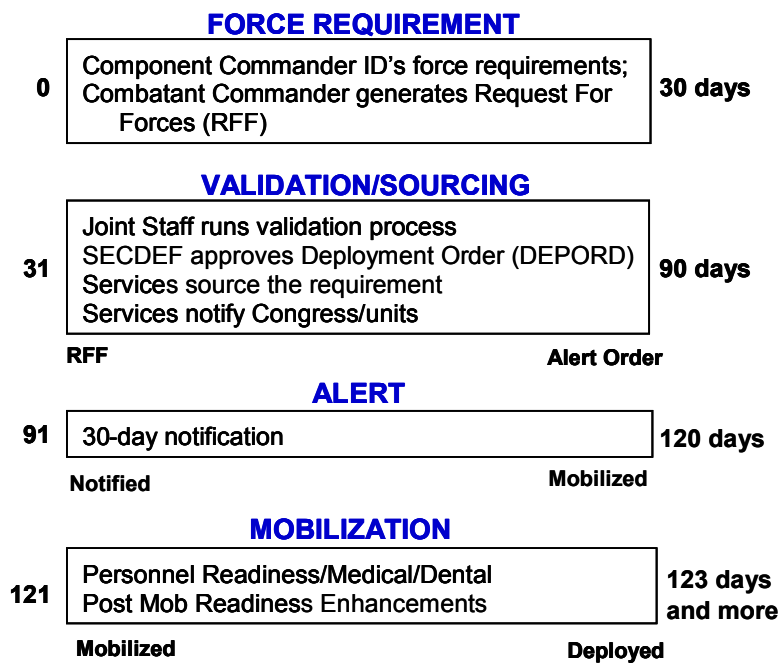
Source: GAO.

Note: Shaded blocks emphasize the extra coordination that was required under the modified process.

**Figure 7. The Mobilization Process (GAO, 2003: 11)**



Much of the inefficiency of the mobilization process, depicted in Figure 7, arises from the lack of visibility over the entire mobilization, to gaining command assignment, to demobilization, to return to reserve status flow. In addition, outdated and unclear guidance from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff to the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard concerning mobilization procedures results in unnecessary delays. Tim Hall, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, believes the overall goal of improving the process is to “get the mobilization timelines down so we mobilize just in time, have the required training, get you over so you can do your job, and get you home as quickly as we can” (Miles, 2003: 3). Figure 8 provides a timeframe for deployment.



**Figure 8. Notional Mobilization Timeline (DoD Mobilization Symposium, 2002: 8)**

As Figures 7 and 8 depict, the mobilization process is both slow and complicated. The DoD Mobilization Symposium of November 2002 recommended accelerating the process by prioritizing requests for forces, assigning responsibility to a single agency for the integration and synchronization of the mobilization process throughout the Services, and developing an automated system to track personnel and units along the mobilization and demobilization process (DoD Mobilization Symposium, 2002: vi-vii). The United States General Accounting Office (GAO) concurred with the Mobilization Symposium's automated tracking system and mobilization process ownership recommendations in its 2003 report. Demonstrating the need for a tracking system and process ownership, the GAO report claimed that the Air National Guard crisis action team was unaware of the activation of the 163<sup>rd</sup> Air Refueling Wing a full three days after the unit's mobilization (GAO, 2003: 30). The Air National Guard blames their oversight on Air Mobility Command, claiming AMC failed to follow proper activation procedures (GAO, 2003: 30). This oversight, according to the GAO, demonstrates the need for mobilization process ownership across the Services so that one lead agency will know and track the movements of every mobilized unit (GAO, 2003: 27). Mobilized units would have much greater visibility across the components using an automated tracker of personnel and units from mobilization and gaining command assignment to demobilization and return to reserve status (GAO, 2003: 27).

The Department of Defense responded to the GAO report and to Secretary Rumsfeld's urgent request to streamline the mobilization process by re-evaluating and updating the current guidance and procedures regarding Reserve component activation (GAO, 2003: 51). In addition, DoD hopes the automated personnel and pay system

currently under development, known as the Defense Integrated Military Human Resource System, will mature into the comprehensive tracking system required to maintain visibility of Reserve units and personnel, once manpower and training information are included (GAO, 2003: 52). Finally, United States Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) spearheads mobilization efficiency efforts by reviewing not only DoD directives, but also database reporting procedures, and legal statutes to identify areas with short term improvement potential. Furthermore, USJFCOM keeps an eye on long term changes needed to improve the mobilization process (USJFCOM, 2004). USJFCOM established a working group for this effort, and along with the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Resources working group on mobilization, together they are expected to report back to Secretary Rumsfeld by September 2004 with quick fixes for short term gains, as well as long term improvements to the mobilization process (USJFCOM, 2004).

Even after applying Future Total Force initiatives to new and existing units, as well as streamlining the mobilization process, the Air Force still faces the problem of attaining the proper mix of forces divided between the ARC and the Active components. In the same memorandum requesting a more efficient mobilization process, Secretary Rumsfeld also tasked the Service Secretaries, Joint Chiefs, and Under Secretaries of Defense with adjusting the mix of forces between the Active and Reserve components to “eliminate the need for involuntary mobilization of the Guard and Reserve” (Rumsfeld, 2003). He opened his memo with the following observation:

The balance of capabilities in the Active and Reserve components today is not the best for the future. We need to promote judicious and prudent use of the Reserve components with force rebalancing initiatives that reduce strain through the efficient application of manpower and technology solutions based on a disciplined force requirements process. (Rumsfeld, 2003)

Almost since the inception of the Total Force policy, the question of appropriate force mix has raised a certain level of debate – recall that during the 1970s skeptics doubted the wisdom of placing any significant forces in the Reserve, and in the 1990s the debate centered around maximizing the ‘peace dividend’ and how heavily weighted the balance could tilt toward the Reserve component. Rumsfeld recognizes that the pendulum has swung too far – that an imbalance now exists leaning too heavily toward the ARC – and he seeks to resolve the resulting “lengthy, repeated, or frequent mobilization of RC individuals and units by changing force structure and/or mix” (Rumsfeld, 2003).

Once again on the leading edge of Total Force initiatives, the Air Force has already taken steps to adjust its force mix. Air Force Secretary Roche recognizes the need for rebalancing or shifting of some career fields.

We have stressed dozens of career fields, particularly those associated with Force Protection, ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) and the buildup and sustainment of expeditionary operations. Our analysis shows that we need to shift about 15,000 airmen to new career fields to meet the demands of this new ‘steady state’. (Roche, 2003)

To begin to accomplish this enormous shift of airmen, the Air Force Reserve Command transferred the Low-Density/High-Demand (LD/HD) Combat Search and Rescue mission from the Reserves in the 939<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing in Portland, Oregon, to the Active component 355<sup>th</sup> Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona (Batbie, 2003: 22). Another LD/HD Air Force asset in line for a potential Future Total Force shift is the EC-130 Commando Solo. Repeatedly activated from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard since 1989’s Operation Just Cause, this unique asset would benefit from the application of a Future Total Force unit structure – either an Associated Unit or Blended Unit structure – to ease its consistently high operations tempo (Hebert, 2003: 36). Although this would

amount to retrofitting to a Future Total Force construct, the fact that the unit is both small and unique contributes to easing the transformation.

In addition to LD/HD mission shifts, the Air Force is increasing the number of Total Force security personnel, Active, ARC, and civilian, where appropriate, to relieve the deployment pressure on that career field (Hebert, 2003: 38). During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Total Force Security Forces guarded the 36 expeditionary air bases in the Central Command area of operations. Therefore, easing the heavy burden of repeated and lengthy deployment under stressful conditions by augmenting their numbers, contracting civilian companies for some security needs, and investing in technology remain high Air Force priorities (Hebert, 2003: 38). With continuing efforts to correct its force mix, the Air Force remains on-time, on-target along the Future Total Force flight plan toward increased retention, better efficiency, and cost savings.

Although the challenges of prudently applying transformational unit structures to both new and existing forces, efficiently streamlining the mobilization process, and correctly rebalancing the mix of forces between the Active and Reserve components represent considerable obstacles on the Future Total Force journey, they amount to mere incremental steps to achieving a 'continuum of service' personnel system. Thomas Hall, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, describes the continuum of service personnel model in the following way:

The concept behind the continuum of service sets aside the traditional definition of Active and Reserve components and recognizes that service may range from full-time duty to individuals who are available in the event of mobilization but do not participate in military training or perform duty on a regular basis. In between these extremes is a pool of individuals who can be involved at any level of participation who may move along the continuum as circumstances in their lives and needs of the Department evolve, and who may move from part-time reserve to full-time active and back, several times during a career. (Hall, 2003: 4).

Implementing such a model, however, requires significant policy, organizational structure, and legislative changes. Policies requiring reserve component personnel to train or participate a certain number of days per year or risk expulsion from their units would need to change. Organizational structures facilitating the movement between components, such as the Blended Unit construct or the Associate Unit structure, would need to become the norm throughout the Air Force, not just Air Mobility Command or select units in Air Combat Command or Air Education and Training Command. In addition, the personnel management system would need drastic alteration, perhaps even a merging or blending of the separate Air Force Personnel Center in San Antonio with the Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver to enhance the overall career flexibility. Laws impeding the flow of personnel between the Active, Guard, and Reserve components would require alteration. The Future Total Force pamphlet calls for these types of changes, recognizing the need to “integrate personnel and finance systems for the three Air Force components, to decentralize career management systems, and provide alternative career paths” (Future Total Force, 2002: 19). Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, David Chu, summarized these required changes in his testimony before the House Armed Services Total Force Subcommittee.

Operating within a continuum of service paradigm necessitates simplifying the rules for employing Reserve Component members, enhancing combined Active Component/Reserve Component career development, and creating conditions for the seamless flow of personnel from active to reserve and reserve to active over the course of a military career. Barriers to such service must be minimized, thereby eliminating the need for workaround solutions often in effect today. (Chu, 2003).

General Jumper echoed the need to overcome these barriers to more flexible service when he described the legal obstacles hampering the new multi-state, multi-component,

blended Predator unit at Nellis AFB, Nevada. “We have to worry about the fact that if you are a Title 10 (Active or Reserve performing as Active) person you can’t command a Title 32 (Guard performing as Guard) person in Title 32 status, and visa versa. There is legislation and language being put forward to help us deal with that, but that’s an issue today” (Jumper, 2003). Some of the legislation, recommended by the U.S. Commission on National Security/21<sup>st</sup> Century as well as General Jumper, breaks down the barriers between the Reserve, Guard, and Active duty personnel systems, and allows for much greater flexibility and movement among components in a single career (United States Commission on National Security/21<sup>st</sup> Century, 2001: 107) Recognizing the enormity of these changes, the commission also recommended the establishment of an Executive-Legislative working group to reconcile differences and facilitate trial programs that will eventually form the basis of a single, flexible and integrated personnel system (United States Commission on National Security/21<sup>st</sup> Century, 2001: 108).

Overcoming the legal barriers to greater integration, as well as prudently applying transformational organization structures and creating a more flexible personnel system, undoubtedly represent significant milestones along the flight plan towards further integration and the future of Future Total Force. However, some cautions need emphasis even as the active duty Air Force progresses toward greater assimilation with its Air Reserve Component. These cautions include recognition and appreciation that the Air Reserve Component is not active duty, and that the importance of preservation of ARC units’ identity cannot be underestimated.

Although Future Total Force initiatives seek to further integrate the active duty and Reserve forces, caution dictates a realization that the components are not the same.

They fly the same types of airplanes. They fly by the same regulations, with the same tactics, techniques, and procedures. And they wear the same uniform. But they are not the same. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Stephen Duncan recognizes the important difference between the components. “The Total Force Policy of the future should not attempt to make the active and reserve fungible items or mirror images of each other” (Duncan, 1997: 227). While appreciating that Reserve airmen may not train as frequently as their active counterparts due to the part-time nature of their service, Duncan realizes that Reserve units contain a wealth of capability from both prior military, as well as civilian experience. This disparity in experience and training comprises one aspect of the Reserve/Active difference. Another difference is the obvious fact that for the Reservist, military service is not a primary occupation. Yes, they do fly the same planes with the same regulations by the same procedures, but it is not their primary job to do so. With the exception of mobilization, they are part-time employees who contribute whenever their schedule permits, so holding them to the same operations tempo and deployment rate is unrealistic.

The task for Air Force leadership is to recognize the differences, and capitalize on the strengths of each component. With the Air Reserve Component’s level of experience and the active duty’s availability and proficiency, Duncan believes “the objective must be to integrate the capabilities and strengths of active and reserve units in the most cost-effective manner, i.e., in a manner that provides the most total military capability and flexibility possible” (Duncan, 1997: 227). Future Total Force initiatives must therefore not only recognize the differences between the components, but take advantage of them.



Heeding the caution of recognizing the components differences will, therefore, benefit the progression of the policy.

The other caution regarding Future Total Force implementation involves preserving the identity and tradition of the Air Reserve Component units, even as they integrate more fully with the active duty. Recall that in 1968, the first Reserve Associate unit, the 944<sup>th</sup> Airlift Group from Norton AFB, worried that their close association with the active duty would mean the loss of their unit identity (Cantwell, 1994: 311). In addition, before the creation of the blended wing of J-STARS at Robbins AFB, Georgia, the Kansas Air National Guard rejected the Future Total Force transformational unit construct for fear that they would lose their unit individuality and character (Tirpak, 2003: 28). It was better, from these units' perspective, to face potential unit closing or elimination rather than to integrate. Given this level of reluctance to integrate, progress along the Future Total Force flight plan must proceed cautiously, with emphasis on the preservation of tradition and identity for both the active and Reserve components. As General Jumper states regarding further integration "we should not be afraid (Jumper, 2003). And the portion of Future Total Force guidance that seeks "creative ways to further the integration of the air components that is different than its past but still connected to its traditions as it evolves in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (Future Total Force, 2002: 3) must not be glossed over or forgotten.

The first legs of the flight plan for the future of Future Total Force involve prudently applying transformational unit structures to both new and existing Air Force units, and streamlining the Air Reserve Component mobilization process. The next legs require a rebalancing of capabilities and forces between the active and Reserve

components, and eventually attaining the flexibility of a continuum of service. All these efforts, however, should be undertaken with the intent of capitalizing on the strengths of the different components while preserving their individual traditions and identities.

From Melvin Laird's original Total Force concept of a more effective and less expensive military in the wake of the Vietnam War, to the current application of Future Total Force initiatives in the Global War on Terror, the utilization of the Air Reserve Component has changed dramatically since 1970. As Representative John McHugh, Chairman of the House Armed Services Total Force Subcommittee, puts it, "In short, the Total Force is being employed in ways never anticipated by those who articulated and implemented the policy some thirty years ago" (McHugh, 2003). The challenge for today's Air Force leadership is to remain cognizant of the lessons of the past taught by the history of the Total Force policy, while striving for more efficiencies and better employment of the Air Reserve Component in the future.

This project has thus far examined the history of the Total Force policy since its inception in 1970. From here, the project explains the methodology used to answer the questions about how this history relates to the policy's current implementation, and how it could influence future utilization of the Air Reserve Component.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

With a basic understanding of the history of the Total Force policy, as well as its current implementation and possible future, it is appropriate to examine the methodology utilized to determine the relationship between the policy's past and potential future. This chapter of the project begins by once again stating the problem, followed by the method used to answer each investigative question.

#### **Problem Statement**

The Total Force idea has evolved from its inception in the 1970s from a concept simply seeking the financial and strategic benefits of more integration and interaction among the active and Reserve components, to a policy where almost no military operation happens without significant Reserve component participation. Air Force Reservists and Air National Guardsmen contribute more often and for longer periods today than ever before under the Air Force's transformational initiative, Future Total Force. This project examines the Future Total Force policy- where it came from, how it has developed since 1970, how it is currently implemented, and why it is important- in an effort to determine guidelines for a potential flight plan for future integration efforts in the coming years.

#### **Research Question**

Based on an examination of the historical factors that influenced its development from the Vietnam era and Cold War to the Air and Space Expeditionary Force and Operation Iraqi Freedom of today, in what direction should the Air Force take its

utilization of the Air Reserve Component under the transformational initiative known as Future Total Force?

### **Investigative Questions and How They Are Answered**

*What factors influenced the development of the Future Total Force initiative?*

The project answers this question by returning to the origins of the Total Force policy and Melvin Laird's original vision of fiscal efficiency and a stronger military through more prudent use of the reserve components. The project then describes the development of the policy from the 1970s by using the original memorandum outlining the concept, and by noting the progression of the concept into formal policy, as well as by citing histories of the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard to gain their perspectives. Staff papers from the Brookings Institution critical of the policy provide a contrasting viewpoint of the time. The project cites military histories once again to outline the policy in the 1980s, in addition to referencing congressional testimony on reserve affairs of the time. To relate the development of the Total Force policy in the 1990s, the project quotes the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs of the time, Stephen Duncan, in addition to the histories already mentioned and media commentators at the time. The Air Force Reserve Command also provided the chart delineating the activations prior to and following Operation Desert Storm, and the United States Transportation Command's Research Center supplied the statistics for their dependence on the ARC during the Gulf War. Other sources used to relate the

development of the Total Force policy include the AFRC News Service, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Air Force Instructions. Although this question required many sources to properly answer, it places the Total Force policy in historical context allowing the reader to see where the policy came from to make informed decisions about where it should go from here.

*What is Future Total Force?*

*Why is Future Total Force important?*

Both these questions find answers with reference to the Air Force's Future Total Force guidance published by Headquarters Air Force, Plans and Programs. Furthermore, quotes from the Air Force Chief of Staff, the Vice Chief of the Air Force Reserve, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, and the Chairman of the Armed Services Total Force Subcommittee, as well as a graph depicting reserve mobilizations from the GAO, re-enforce the Future Total Force publication.

*How is Future Total Force currently implemented?*

In addition to referencing the Future Total Force guidance, the project answers this question by citing published Air Force history and contemporary news articles. The Air Force Reserve Command provides useful statistics and examples of transformational unit structures, and the individual unit web pages present valuable perspective as well. The project also quotes the Secretary of the Air Force, and the Chief of Staff, commenting on Future Total Force unit constructs and their effectiveness.

*Based on the factors that influenced its development and its current implementation, what direction should the Air Force take with regard to Future Total Force in the coming years?*

The answer to this question draws from many of the sources already mentioned, and relies heavily on current Air Force leadership perspectives. Quotes from the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs all bolster the requirement for further integration and a balanced mix of force capabilities between the active and Reserve components, as well as the need for a streamlined mobilization process. In addition, reports from the DoD Mobilization Symposium, USJFCOM, and the General Accounting Office confirm the need for a more efficient mobilization process. Articles from Air Force Magazine and testimony before the House Armed Services Committee describe the need to rebalance the force mix. Moreover, the United States Commission on National Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the Chief of Staff agree on the need for greater flexibility in military personnel assignments.

*What caution should be observed with regard to future application of Future Total Force initiatives?*

Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Stephen Duncan answers this question in his book outlining the politics of using the Reserve components. In addition, this project draws from the USAF history, once again, and the Future Total Force publication itself to find a complete answer.

With an understanding of the method used to answer each investigative question, this project continues with synthesis of the information presented in each answer into an analysis of the overall research question.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Analysis**

The history of the Total Force policy offers valuable lessons for today's Air Force leadership as they determine a flight plan for Future Total Force initiatives. These lessons provide the context for judging the current utilization of the Air Reserve Component, and suggest an appropriate vector for the Future Total Force policy. From the Vietnam era to the Global War on Terror, the development of the policy from Total Force to the Air Force's Future Total Force provides guidance for the implementation of further USAF initiatives.

Not only did Military Airlift Command's Reserve Associate program predate Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's 1970 memorandum outlining the Total Force concept, but according to Air Force Reserve historian Gerald Cantwell, Laird's memorandum actually uses some of the same verbiage as the established Air Force policy of the time (Cantwell, 1994: 250). In addition, the proliferation of the Reserve Associate program from just the mobility wing at Norton AFB in 1968, to Travis, Dover, Charleston, and McGuire's wings by 1974 confirms the efficacy of the program (Cantwell, 1994: 312). Moreover, these mobility wings, as well as all of the Air Reserve Forces of the time, demonstrated an excellent level of combat readiness in the critical first few years of the Total Force policy (Cantwell, 1994: 336). Therefore, the lesson of the 1970s, demonstrated by the Air Reserve Forces in particular, is the unquestionable viability of the Total Force policy. The integrated performance of the Air Force of the 1970s did not simply prove that the policy could work. It proved that the policy did

work, and emboldened the military leadership of the 1980s to dramatically increase their investment in the reserve component.

The proven viability of the Total Force policy in the 1970s justified the dramatic financial and manpower increases of the Reagan era in the 1980s. From 1980 to 1989, the Air Force Reserve's operations and maintenance budget effectively doubled - \$511 million to \$1.07 billion, and their flying hours more than tripled from 139,000 to 497,000 hours (Cantwell, 1994: 347). Reagan's investment paid off as the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard during this period demonstrated a high state of readiness and skill level, equal to or even exceeding their active counterparts (Cantwell: 1994: 340). The lesson of the 1980s, therefore, is that investment in the Total Force pays off.

Another lesson the 1980s teaches about the Air Force's implementation of the Total Force policy comes from the report of the Air Force Management Assistance Group of 1982. After commending the Air Reserve Forces for their demonstrated excellence in all measured areas of operation, the group's report went on to recommend sweeping changes in the leadership, management, and structure of the Air Force Reserve (Cantwell: 1994: 340). Some of these changes include bringing the reserve personnel center and recruiting functions directly under active duty control, transferring much of the Office of the Air Force Reserve functions to the Air Staff, and stripping the Chief of Air Force Reserve of his role as Commander of Headquarters Air Force Reserve (Cantwell, 1994: 340). Ironically, the Air Force Management Assistance Group made these recommendations even as the Congress directed the other services to emulate USAF integration structure and initiatives (Cantwell, 1994: 341). The report's recommendations seem to suggest that the Air Force Reserve would be better managed



with a greater level of active duty involvement, that integration of the components means more control of the Reserve by the Active Component, and that a less powerful Reserve would result in a more powerful Total Force. The rejection of the recommendations by nearly all levels of Air Force leadership of the 1980s has several implications for the leadership of today as they develop Future Total Force initiatives. First, the importance of managing reservists with reservists cannot be overstated. Even as the Blended Unit structure gains popularity, maintaining Reserve representation in leadership and management is critical to the morale and performance of reservists. Secondly, integration of the Reserve is not subjugation of the Reserve. Future Total Force works because the components share the burden in a partnership, not because the active component dictates the actions of the Reserve. Future Total Force works because of the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the components to create a more efficient, more cost effective force. Finally, as the 1980s demonstrated and the 1990s proved beyond any doubt, a more powerful Reserve results in a more powerful Total Force.

The performance of the Air Reserve Component during Operation Desert Storm as the 1990s began confirmed that the build up of the 1980s had been worth every dollar. The Reserve not only showed up for the conflict, but their performance in the conduct of the war represented a watershed event in their future utilization. From eleven activations in the 38 years prior to the Gulf War to more than sixty since its end, the Reserve Components proved that the Total Force policy worked, and subsequently, they shouldered the burden of the 'peace dividend' as the Iron Curtain fell. The Total Force lessons of the 1990s include the effectiveness of the Reserve as a fighting force, and their ability to take on additional roles and deployments.

As the new millennium began, however, the wisdom of a high level of reliance on the Reserve Component came into question. The Air Reserve Component mobilized more often and for longer periods than ever before since the attacks of September 11, 2001, placing a previously unknown burden on their families and employers. Operation Noble Eagle, followed by Enduring Freedom and then Iraqi Freedom stretched the ARC to capacity. In this challenging environment, Future Total Force initiatives have the conflicting challenge of integrating the Reserve more fully, while understanding that they are the Reserve, and do not have the same availability as active forces. The Total Force lesson of the new millennium to date is that the Reserve Component has a breaking point. Not all missions belong in the Reserve, and the ‘peace dividend’ is only so large.

As the Air Force progresses along the Future Total Force flight path, seeking the financial benefits of using the Air Reserve Component more wisely, retaining the most talented people for continued service, and integrating the components wherever it is measurably beneficial to do so, it must keep the Total Force history lessons in mind. The policy is viable, but must be funded to be completely effective. In addition, integration does not mean subjugation – Future Total Force symbiosis must be maintained. Finally, there is a limit to the burden that the Air Reserve Component can shoulder. Every Future Total Force initiative - from applying Reserve Associate or Active Associate or Blended constructs to new and existing units, to streamlining the mobilization process, to rebalancing the force mix, to establishing the continuum of service – every initiative must apply the history lessons of the Total Force policy.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Study**

The history of the Total Force policy teaches valuable lessons that provide both a context to judge the Air Force's Future Total Force initiatives of today, as well as guidelines for future application of the policy. These lessons include the demonstrated viability of the Total Force policy, and the necessity to invest in the Reserve forces for their complete efficacy. Knowledge that the Total Force policy works, as demonstrated for over thirty years, quells the frantic nature of the recent calls for reinstatement of the draft to augment military forces in Iraq. In addition, integration of the Air Reserve Component does not mean subjugation of it, proven by the mutually beneficial relationship of the blended J-STARS and Predator wings. Active, Guard, and Reserve personnel working together, side-by-side, epitomizes the efficacy of the Future Total Force policy, and must continue. Finally, the limits of Reserve participation now being realized with the frequency and duration of activations to fight the Global War on Terror present the most compelling reason that Future Total Force initiatives must continuously progress. The Reserve Component is currently stretched to its limit; therefore, initiatives to utilize it more prudently and effectively will continue to be needed in the coming years. Whether it is the application of innovative organizational structures to new and to existing units, streamlining the mobilization process for reservists, rebalancing the force mix, or establishing a continuum of service, application of Future Total Force in the years to come must consider the lessons of the past.

This project considers the history of the Total Force policy as a reference for judging the present implementation of the Air Force's Future Total Force, as well as a guideline for its application in the years to come. Other projects should consider the effects of applying Future Total Force organizational structures to well established units. For example, how would blending work in an Air Mobility Command squadron? To date, the blended structure has only been applied to immature weapons systems like the J-STARS and Predator, not to C-130s or C-17s. In addition, the establishment of a continuum of service creates many areas for further study. How will it work, exactly? Who will control the service member's records throughout their careers? How will promotions be made? How will retirement work? Finally, although many groups are currently examining the issue, the streamlining of the mobilization process has many opportunities for closer evaluation. How can the process be made faster? How can the services better leverage information technology to make the process more efficient? Consideration of these issues will also serve to advance the Future Total Force flight plan effectively into the future.

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. <b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</b>					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 25-05-2004		2. REPORT TYPE Graduate Research Project		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) Jun 2003 - Jun 2004	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Past, Present, and Future of the Air Force's Future Total Force				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Dennis P. Duffy, Major, USAFR				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  Air Force Institute of Technology Graduate School of Engineering and Management (AFIT/ENS) 2950 P Street, Building 640 WPAFB OH 45433-7765				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER AFIT/GMO/ENS/04E-04	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release, distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT This project examines the history of the Total Force policy since its inception in 1970 through its implementation today in an effort to determine a future direction for the Air Force's Future Total Force initiative. It cites histories of the Air Force, the Air National Guard, and the Air Force Reserve to depict the historical reference for the Total Force policy. The project relies on the Congressional testimony by subject matter experts such as undersecretaries of defense, the Secretary of the Air Force, and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, as well as the Air Force's own Future Total Force policy pamphlet to relate the current implementation and potential future direction for the policy. Analysis of the past implementation does offer lessons for future implementation of the policy. These lessons include the undeniable efficacy of the policy, given proper manning and funding of the Air Reserve Component. The vital importance of maintaining a symbiotic relationship between the active duty and Air Reserve Component represents another lesson of the history of the Total Force policy. Finally, realizing the limitations of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve within the context of the Air and Space Expeditionary Force is a final lesson to consider when determining the future of the Air Force's Future Total Force.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Reserve Component, Future Total Force, Total Force					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: Unclassified			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  94	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Dr. James T. Moore
a. REPORT U	b. ABSTRACT U	c. THIS PAGE U			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) (937) 255-3636 Ext 4528